(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI PABAN SINGH GHATOWAR): (a) to (c). The Central Government on the recommendation of the CBT, EPF periodically declares the rate of interest to be credited to the accounts of PF Subscribers. The rate of interest at present is 12% per annum. Keeping in view the overall interest of national economy the present interest rate is considered adequate.

Closure of Durgapur unit of HFC

4412. DR. ASIM BALA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to close down the Durgapur Unit of the Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, whether the Government propose to revive this unit; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. CHINTA MOHAN): (a) There is no such proposal.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d). In 1988, the consultants had recommended revamp/rehabilitation of the operating units (except Namrup-III) of Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation. For the Durgapur unit, the cost involved was Rs. 171.38 cores, which was updated to Rs. 213.51 cores as in February, 1990. Since very large investments were involved, no final decision was taken.

Reprocessing Technology for Plutonium

4413. SHRI DHARAMPAL SINGH MALIK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether plutonium is to be separated from nuclear waste and this process involve very high cost;

(b) whether this reprocessing technology cannot be kept secret from the rest of the world;

(c) if so, the names of the countries in the world which at present have this facility;

(d) whether Iran also has such a technology; and

(e) if not, the reasons for not supplying a 10 MW reactor by India to Iran and thereby entering into high technology exports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA): (a) For any application requiring use of Plutonium, reprocessing of spent fuel discharged from the Nuclear Reactors, is a pre-requisite. Indian experience in reprocessing shows that the costs in India are significantly lower than those quoted in developing countries pursuing this technology.

(b) In view of proliferation concerns related to plutonium, the reprocessing technology is not open to international cooperation though the basic chemical process flowsheet itself is well known.

(c) Very few countries in the world are known to be having large scale commercial reprocessing technology. Besides India, USA, UK, France, USSR, Germany, Japan, Belgium and Italy are known to be having